always considerably higher. Steps to augument availability include increased indigenous production/alongwith imports.

Privatisation of Steel Plants

*207. SHRI M.V. CHANDRASEKHARA MURTHY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Durgapur steel unit improves show during Apr-Oct" appearing in the 'Economics Times' dated November 12,1991;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government propose to hand over some of the steel plants in the Public Sector to some private parties despite their improved performance; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Yes, Sir. The performance of the Durgapur Steel Plant has shown an improvement during the period April to October, 1991 compared to budget for the year and corresponding period of last year.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

[*Translation*]

Assistance to African Countries under Commonwealth Africa Aid Programme

*208. SHRI RAM BADAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of assistance provided to different African countries by India under the Commonwealth Africa Aid Programme during 1991;

(b) whether the Government have decided to increase the amount of assistance under this programme during 1992; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) There is no Commonwealth Africa Aid Programme.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Pakistan's Request to Britain in Solving Kashmir Issue

*209. KUMARI UMA BHARTI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister of Pakistan had sought the help of the British Prime Minister in solving the Kashmir issue during their recent meeting in Harare; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) and (b). In his bilateral meeting with the British Prime Minister in Harare on 18 October, 1991 on the occasion of the Commonwealth Summit, the Prime Minister of Pakistan is reported to have stated that Britain could play a role in resolving the Kashmir issue. There have been media reports to this effect.

Government are firmly of the view that under the Simla Agreement all difference with Pakistan are to be resolved bilaterally. The question therefore of third party involvement of any sort, does not arise.